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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: HAITI ELECTIONS: OUR ROLE IN ENSURING SUCCESS

REF: PAUP 3031

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs Timothy M. Carney for reasons 1.4(b).

11. (C) I want to highlight for you the most problematic issues remaining to be resolved and outline how we can best work through these issues. We updated the broader status of critical tasks in reftel. In essence, at the time the Haitians are getting their act together, the international players are revealing critical weaknesses. CEP President Mathurin and his advisors; CEP DG Jacques Bernard; and CEP member Josefa Gauthier (protect), have separately approached me and/or the DCM to voice serious concern about MINUSTAH/OAS work on mechanics. Thoughtful "Council of Wise Persons" member Christian Rousseau has just expressed public concern about realizing the first round on January 8.

12. (C) Slow distribution of national ID cards by the OAS continues to be the most serious concern, but nagging delays in finalizing the locations of voting centers -- the extent of which MINUSTAH had not previously informed the Core Group -- is equally problematic. Because ID card distribution is the mechanism by which the elections officials inform voters where to vote, these two issues must be resolved together. While elections could proceed without full distribution of ID cards, elections officials must still finalize the locations of voting centers in order to develop an alternative plan to inform voters the location of their polling sites.

13. (C) These and likely, if unforeseen, future problems can be solved, but will require deft and careful engagement on our part. The CEP, MINUSTAH, and the OAS all control vital resources and have critical roles to play. Despite the myriad of shortcomings and bad management in all three institutions, it is simply impractical at this stage to remove any of these institutions from the process. To do so would create more delay. It is equally critical, however, that the UN and the OAS immediately detail senior elections experts to oversee final preparations. We must make absolutely clear to both organizations that their staffs on the ground, though working diligently, are not sufficiently experienced, and that their institutional reputations are at stake.

14. (C) Without provoking more finger-pointing or exerting pressure that would simply generate empty assurances, the U.S. must lead the Core Group in continuing to support CEP DG Jacques Bernard's efforts to integrate resources and solve problems. Specifically, we must convince the CEP and the IGOH to establish the legal basis to allow registered voters to vote without their IDs. At the same time, the CEP, MINUSTAH, and the OAS must finalize the location of voting sites and organize a campaign to inform registered voters without ID cards where to vote. Finally, because ID card distribution remains a critical barometer for the success of the elections, and still the most effective way to steer voters to their voting centers, we must ensure that OAS and the CEP proceed with card distribution with all due urgency, and that they integrate all available personnel from MINUSTAH into the sorting and distribution process without regard to bureaucratic responsibilities.

15. (C) As for the electoral budget, it is increasingly clear that MINUSTAH does not have adequate technical capability on the ground to produce an accurate accounting. The Canadians told us on December 13 that they are hiring an accounting firm to do weekly financial reviews, but not to audit. The UN needs to immediately dispatch a team to audit the budget, improve efficiency and establish priorities, and to limit the budget shortfall to the maximum extent possible.

16. (C) Carlos Pascual will be able to advance our agenda during his visit here December 19-20. Pending your own visit, we also need to focus attention in New York and to enlist IO and USUN in impressing upon UN officials the urgent need for them to dedicate the best possible expertise available in getting the MINUSTAH elections team on track.
CARNEY